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## Viewing cable 05PORTAUPRINCE1459, HAITI: CORE GROUP ALARMED BY SLOW PACE OF

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#05PORTAUPRINCE1459**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">05PORTAUPRINCE1459</a>	<a href="#">2005-05-25 20:36</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Port Au Prince</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume4-52/La%20nomination%20de%20Gousse.asp>

<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume4-52/Bernard%20Gousse.asp>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 001459

SIPDIS

WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS  
SOUTHCOR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITI: CORE GROUP ALARMED BY SLOW PACE OF  
ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS

REF: PAP 1088

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Foley, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

**1.** (C) Summary: UN and OAS elections advisors treated Core Group members to an alarming appraisal of the pace of elections preparations during a marathon meeting on May 20. The appraisal suggested that the government, CEP, and international community face an almost impossible task in meeting the registration deadline defined by the electoral calendar and highlighted again the apparent incapacity of the CEP and the IGOH to succeed in their mandate to provide successful elections. Valdes touted the accomplishments of recent discussions hosted by the UN among political party leaders, which have helped narrow the divisions on crucial issues of justice and governability ahead of the elections. Septel will report on other Core Group issues, including operations in Cite Soleil and the Neptune situation. End summary.

Elections Preparations Behind Schedule  
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**2.** (C) Core Group members greeted with skepticism UN Deputy elections chief Denis Racicot's assessment that "there is still enough space" in the electoral calendar to realize election plans. Racicot reported that several deals are under discussion to attempt to close the \$22m deficit in the \$60.7m overall elections budget. He highlighted recent discussions with the EU for \$8m, Japan for \$1.5-3m, and pledges by the U.S. for \$8m. He also said a recent evaluation of the budget by Canadian expert Ron Gould strongly recommended further, permanent assistance from budget experts to fine tune and

administer the plan.

13. (C) Racicot's matter-of-fact update on the registration program, however, was nothing short of alarming. As of May 19, less than 20 of the planned 424 registration centers were open (almost 2 months since registration was supposed to begin and one month since the first center actually opened), and as of May 20 only 55,000 people had registered. Core Group members (in particular the Canadian and Mexican Ambassadors) were quick to point out that there were only 142 days left until the election and only 82 days left until voter rolls were due, suggesting a "mathematical impossibility" that registration could be completed in time. Racicot said that UNOPS (which is responsible for refurbishing and preparing registration centers) expected to have a total of 148 sites open by June 17, but gave no date for the completion of the entire network of 424 centers. (Note: If registration closes as originally planned on July 31 in order to have voter lists prepared by August 9, two months before the first election, the program would have to register over 40,000 people per day every day, simply to get to a modest goal of 3 million Haitians. End note).

14. (C) Valdes said it was clear that something had to be done quickly to address the situation. OAS Elections Chief Elizabeth Spehar responded that there were three possible options: A) a massive effort to open new centers, B) change the electoral calendar, or C) change the registration methodology to make it more simple. Spehar said the OAS was focusing for the moment on option A and had developed an urgent strategy to increase registration. First, the OAS was moving quickly to open 30 "priority sites" that would serve the largest density of potential voters. She said that these sites could potentially register up to 60% of the entire electorate. Secondly, the OAS was attempting to add more computers and people to the registration centers that were already open in order to serve more people. Third, OAS organizers were launching 30 mobile registration centers on June 1 (with a total of 75 on the road by July 1) in order to begin serving areas where permanent stations were still unavailable.

15. (C) Spehar proclaimed the OAS strategies "have a chance" at working, but admitted that some existing centers were underutilized and that the plan did not address the meager efforts undertaken to date to motivate people to register. While UNOPS claims radio announcements, banners and T-shirts are already available, Spehar said it was clear more needed to be done. Valdes suggested he would raise the issue also with the political parties in order to ask their assistance in motivating the population to register.

OAS Blames CEP and government  
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16. (C) OAS Ambassador Denneth Modeste put most of the blame for the slow pace of registration upon the CEP, telling Core Group members May 20 "no matter what options the international community discusses, the elections will not succeed until the CEP is willing to take on its task." He said the CEP "cannot deliver" and called for the Core Group to "ring the alarm bells" collectively with the CEP and the IGOH. Racicot concurred that many of the problems were traceable back to CEP/IGOH foot-dragging on everything from selecting registration sites to training staff. Valdes said he was worried about the CEP and said it was imperative for the Core Group to assist them. In particular, he decried the CEP's recent refusal to accept assistance from CARICOM, despite support from both the PM and political parties to welcome it. Valdes asked Core Group members to persuade the CEP to accept CARICOM elections aid.

Parties Weigh in on Neptune, Gousse  
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17. (C) During the same Core Group meeting, SRS Valdes provided a more positive report on discussions among political party leaders hosted by the UN in the wake of the UNSC visit (ref A). Valdes said that a May 11 meeting, organized by MINUSTAH in response to a request from several party leaders, had generated a welcome sense of cooperation and civic activity among participants, including several from Lavalas. Most notably, the politicians had come together on the subject of certain sensitive detainees. While the majority was unwilling to join Lavalas leaders' call for the liberation of all "political prisoners," they had created a commission to try to resolve the issue of "prolonged arrest." Valdes explained that those political parties with a realistic chance of winning in fall elections wanted to get rid of potential human rights problems and therefore leaned towards releasing certain sensitive prisoners, Neptune in particular. Lesly Voltaire told Valdes that if Neptune and a few others were released, he could envision a "political accord" with Lavalas on elections.

18. (C) The political party meeting had spawned other

commissions and activities, including a committee on "Governability" to devise common principles and a working group on "Transition" charged with planning for the handover of power in 2006. The political parties also agreed to hold a joint meeting with the PM and the CEP, and expressed interest in taking on other subjects as a group, including the Cite Soleil situation and reform of the Haitian National Police (HNP). Valdes admitted that the problems between the parties had not disappeared, but he said the meeting, which would be followed by another on May 25, had achieved noticeable progress.

19. (C) Valdes said that practically all participants agreed that the Prime Minister and President should complete their terms, but many suggested the IGOH should replace some members of the cabinet, especially Justice Minister Gousse. (The PM later reported to Valdes that the "Transition" group told him they supported the IGOH but "suggested" certain ministers be changed.) Valdes claimed that the President favored replacing Gousse, but was concerned about creating a "martyr for Haitian sovereignty" if it were perceived that Gousse was ditched in order to free Neptune. The French Ambassador cautioned that the President and PM had not made up their minds on Gousse. Valdes said replacing Gousse would be a good thing for both justice and security in Haiti, but that the timing was certainly delicate. He alluded to recent allegations against HNP Director General (DG) Leon Charles (accused of using his post in the HNP to privately benefit from a commission set up to compensate victims from the former government's cooperative financial debacle) and said that the weak position of Gousse, Charles, and State Secretary for Public Security David Basile, was frustrating any coherent IGOH response to security challenges.

Comment

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10. (C) It is indeed time for alarm bells regarding elections preparations. Blame for the sluggish registration process can be shared all around. UNOPS and UN are responsible for identifying the registration sites, refurbishing them and making them available to the OAS, which is responsible for furnishing the necessary equipment, and hiring, training, and overseeing the registration workers. MINUSTAH's cash flow problem meant UNOPS did not get funded to move quickly enough back in early spring, so UNOPS was slow to open sites. Communication and fingerpointing still hamper OAS-UN interaction, though that has improved. The IGOH has dithered in providing public building sites (many of which are available and more easily refurbished), and in other matters including formally publishing the electoral calendar and issuing the decree that legalizes the digital voter registration card as an ID. For its part the CEP has been distracted by relatively minor issues (for example, CEP member Francois Benoit's continuing insistence on buying a satellite system to deliver voter results) and hampered by its continuing lack of operational staff and continued bad blood among some members. We are calling on Core Group members to put the CEP and the IGOH on the spot and press them to focus on what is needed now; namely, a significant effort to ensure a successful registration process. The underlying message is that the election is first and foremost a Haitian responsibility. That said, the reality is that successful elections according to the current timetable will require far more effort and engagement from the international community than was originally thought. End comment.

FOLEY